



# FRIENDS OF THE LAND

A Newsletter of Iowa's Natural Resources Volunteer Friends Groups

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## Friends of Pine Creek Grist Mill Win National Award



The award presentation at Heritage Day. Left to right are Tom Basten, Logan McWean, Scott Gibbs, Tom Hanifan (holding the award), Agnes Digney, David Metz, Jim Ohl, Mitch White, Kevin Szcodronski, Dale Awbrey, Bob Delong, Ken Hyman and Merry Rankin

At this year's Pine Creek Grist Mill's Heritage Day celebration, a new event was added to the day's roster - accepting a national award. Chief of Parks for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Kevin Szcodronski presented the Friends of Pine Creek Grist Mill with the very prestigious 2007 President's award from the National Association of Park Directors. The Mill is located at Wildcat Den State Park in Muscatine County.

Since organizing in 1996, Friends volunteers have committed their skills and time to restoration, interpretation, special events and fundraising for the Mill's ongoing projects. Tom Hanifan, Friends President said volunteers have devoted more than 40,000 hours in bringing the Mill back to life. "The passion in the group for what we do is rare," said Hanifan. "The variety of skills among our members is also a very rare commodity for such a small group of volunteers."

Charles Salkin, president of the National Association of State Park

commended that the Friends apply for the award.

The Friends responded to Szcodronski's suggestion by creating a 10-page report highlighting their various projects. The report described the way the Mill's builder, Benjamin Nye, the first settler in Muscatine County, built the mill in 1848 and the mill's vital role in the county's 19th century economy. Several years after building the mill, Nye died following a deadly battle with his estranged son-in-law, George McCoy. Throughout ensuing years, the structure was owned by various people and remained in operation until the 1920s. In 1927, lack of business closed mill operations and the state of Iowa bought the structure as an addition to Wildcat Den State Park. State officials had hoped to preserve and restore the landmark, but limited financial resources prevented any major work from taking place until the Friends dedicated themselves to saving the sleeping structure.

In 2002, the Mill, which is one of

only two water-powered mills remaining in Iowa, began operating again. The Mill's new life has been celebrated with a permanent schedule of guided tours for visitors in warmer months, educational programs for area youth and the annual Heritage Day celebration held each September.

For more information on the activities of the Friends of the Pine Creek Grist Mill visit their website at:

[www.pinecreekgristmill.com](http://www.pinecreekgristmill.com)

Congratulations to this outstanding group of Friends!

### Do you know what these Iowa State Parks have in common?

Backbone	Lake Wapello
Beed's Lake	Ledges
Black Hawk Lake	Palisades-Kepler
Dolliver	Pilot Knob
Lake Keomah	Pine Lake
Lake MacBride	Springbrook
Lake Manawa	Stone

See Page 4 for the answer.

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## DARLINGS OF THE LAKE

Just a few short years ago, reports from Lake Darling were far from encouraging. Since Ding Darling, the lake's namesake, "set the gate", in 1950 the lake had slowly been vanishing.

According to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the original 302-acre lake had receded to just under 267 acres in a short 44-year time period. Sediment washing in from the watershed was filling the lake. Excess nutrients, pesticides and bacteria were washing in with the sediment. Increased bacteria levels prompted several advisories over the past several years and landed the lake on the state's list of impaired waterways.

Through conservation efforts that began in 1994, and an unyielding commitment on the part of the Friends of Lake Darling, area farmers, DNR and other community activists in restoring and preserving the lake, this has all changed. Not only has the lake been removed from the impaired waterways listing, it is now a thriving ecological and recreational asset to its surrounding communities and the state of Iowa.

The fourteen year campaign has included baseline studies to under-

stand the relationship between bacteria levels and lake impacts.

"We've become self-educated," said Friends Of Lake Darling Vice President and local veterinarian Fay Vittetoe. For example, the conservation efforts on the part of area farmers became a substantial win-win. Through their commitment, erosion control ponds, tile outlet terraces and sediment basins were and continue to be built. The ponds trap about 95 percent of sediment from their drainage area, according to the DNR, and less nutrients, top soil and chemicals are washed into the lake. Right now the water is cleaner, the park has more amenities and there's a lot of excitement about the future of this great lake in southeast Iowa.

With phase one – restoration of the lake – well underway, the Friends of Lake Darling have been steadily working towards the second phase of their vision – a beach shelter with a restroom facility, utilities and a handicap walkway. This year-round facility will feature seating for 200 people with a meeting room, kitchen, storage, restrooms, a covered patio (seating 50 additional people), geothermal heating and cooling and plenty of parking. The

lodge will be available for individuals and organizations to rent. A ground-breaking ceremony for this structure was held in July 2007 and construction ensued shortly thereafter.

Vittetoe said the lodge and beach shelter were a dream of the founders of Lake Darling and the Friends group wants to complete their vision.

"It has taken almost 57 years to complete that vision, but it is finally going to happen," she said.

The Friends of Lake Darling raised the money needed through an appropriation from the Iowa Legislature, and the Iowa DNR, a grant from the Washington County Riverboat Foundation, matching challenge funds from the Jerry B. Robinson, donations from local communities and private individuals (both monetary and in-kind, and various fundraising events.

"We want to leave something for the next 50, 100 years," Vittetoe said. Undoubtedly they have. Congratulations to this Friends group on your hard work and successes!

For updates on construction and fundraising efforts visit:

[www.friendsoflakedarling.com](http://www.friendsoflakedarling.com).



*The accomplishments that the Friends of Lake Darling, area farmers, DNR and countless others have made is a tribute to the lake's namesake, Ding Darling himself, the "father" of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, founder of the National Wildlife Federation and the legendary Des Moines Register editorial cartoonist.*

*Conservation and restoration efforts have assisted in yielding trophy catches such as those being held by Bud Pitt, Friends of Lake Darling member who poses here. View additional photos at [www.friendsoflakedarling.com](http://www.friendsoflakedarling.com).*

**"Setting the Gate"** - A ceremony in which an honored guest closes the valve on a spillway, completing the impoundment process.

### ON-LINE GRANT TUTORIAL

Need to brush up your grant writing skills? A **FREE** comprehensive grant writing program provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Purdue University can be accessed at [www.purdue.edu/dp/envirosoft/grants/src/msieopen.htm](http://www.purdue.edu/dp/envirosoft/grants/src/msieopen.htm).



## F R I E N D S O F C E D A R R O C K W R I G H T I N I O W A

While Frank Lloyd Wright is almost universally recognized as the 20<sup>th</sup> century's greatest architect, his work in Iowa is relatively unknown, but this might be changing.

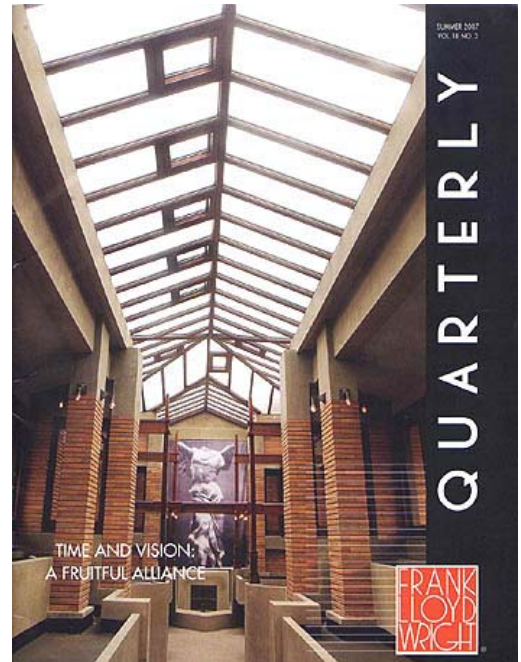
As part of their mission - to support and sustain the preservation, maintenance, and development of Frank Lloyd Wright's *Walter House* through education, promotion, and fundraising - The Friends of Cedar Rock have developed *Wright in Iowa* for the Frank Lloyd Wright Quarterly. It will appear in December 2007 (Winter 2008 edition).

The 40-page, full color publication includes an overview of the significance of Wright's Iowa projects and detailed discussions about the two Wright buildings now operated as house museums--the Stockman House (1908) in Mason City, and the Walter House, "Cedar Rock," in Quasqueton (designed 1945, completed 1950). Also included is a history of the Park Inn Hotel and City National Bank Building (designed 1908) in Mason City and current efforts to restore that landmark as well as an overview of Wright's other Iowa works. Beautiful color photographs and Wright drawings accompany the informative text. The *Quarterly* is published by the

Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation whose international headquarters are located at Taliesin West in Scottsdale, AZ. The Foundation also owns Wright's Wisconsin masterpiece, Taliesin, in Spring Green, WI and operates the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture.

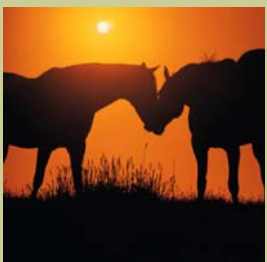
Copies of the "Wright in Iowa" *Quarterly* are available by mail. Send \$7 to: Winter 2008 QUARTERLY, Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, P.O. Box 4430, Scottsdale, AZ. 85261-4430. In addition, to celebrate this Century of Wright in Iowa, two special summer 2008 bus tours showcasing the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Burley Griffin, and Louis Sullivan are being organized by the Stockman House and the Friends of Cedar Rock. On Saturday, May 17, 2008 a tour begins at Quasqueton and will visit architecture sites in Cedar Rapids, Grinnell and Marshalltown. On Saturday, June 21, 2008 a tour starts in Mason City and visits sites in the immediate area. Each tour will include informative lectures and historical information. Box lunches and refreshments will be provided.

For trip details, prices and additional information, contact the Friends of Cedar Rock (319) 934-3572 or email



Pat.Schmitz@dnr.iowa.gov or contact rbmccoy@netconx.net or call the Stockman House after May 1, 2008, (641) 421-3666. For more information regarding the Friends of Cedar Rock visit [www.iowadnr.com/parks/state\\_park\\_list/cedar\\_rock.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/parks/state_park_list/cedar_rock.html).

### HORSING AROUND AT ELK ROCK AND RECEIVING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION



Friends of Elk Rock State Park have been busy horsing around this past year - but in a good way that has made improvements to the park. Through successful fundraising, a new 100 x 200 horse arena and horse wash area are now available to park users. The improvements have been well received by visitors to Elk Rock State Park, and the facility has quite a reputation for its trail riding opportunities. In fact, upon recently visiting Elk Rock, Janine Wilder, who is an international freelance writer, author, photographer, horse traveler and trail rider wrote, "When I think about Iowa I don't think about corn, I think about horses, trails, and camping. Iowa has some very nice equestrian campgrounds, in fact they are some of the best state facilities you will find anywhere in this country. Lucky horsemen!"

This is quite a compliment considering Janine and her husband Jim have ridden thousands of miles throughout 49 states. Read Janine's full article at [http://horsecity.com/stories/051206/tra\\_elkrock\\_JW.shtml](http://horsecity.com/stories/051206/tra_elkrock_JW.shtml).

Congratulations to the Elk Rock Friends on their hard work and international recognition!

### DID YOU KNOW?

When Edgar Harlan - who served as the second director and curator of the Historical Department of Iowa and played a key role in acquiring many of the museum's most important collections - spoke during the 1920 ceremonies dedicating Iowa's first state park (Backbone State Park), he quoted Shakespeare to convey the importance of the place and the event stating: "... those who 'find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything' will find here an exalted interest."

## BUDGET BOOSTING RESOURCES

### ALCAN PRIZE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Any not-for-profit, civil society or nongovernmental organization based anywhere in the world can enter for the annual \$1 million prize for contributions to economic, environmental and/or social sustainability. Additionally, Alcan Grants valued at \$15,000 are awarded to the remaining nine shortlisted organizations with the specific intention of investing in certifiable training and capacity building for the organization. **Deadline March 31, 2008.** For details visit [www.alcanprizeforsustainability.com](http://www.alcanprizeforsustainability.com).

### IOWA COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

Iowa Community Foundations are tax-exempt charitable organizations created by and for the people of our state's diverse communities. They help Iowans make a positive, local impact by offering a variety of **FREE** tools to help people achieve their charitable goals and do good work in their communities that lasts forever. [www.iowacommunityfoundations.org](http://www.iowacommunityfoundations.org).

### IOWA GRANT MAKERS

This **FREE** comprehensive online database provides contact information for organizations that offer annual programs and ongoing funding for Iowa non-profits. Access this data base at the Iowa State Library's website at [www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/funding-info/foundation/ia-foundations](http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/funding-info/foundation/ia-foundations).

### ELM RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ERI)

When you order six or more No. 3 Liberty Elms, ERI will donate a larger Liberty Elm with Liberty Tree Memorial Plaque and framed Elm Etching with Thomas Paine poem "Liberty Tree". Size of **FREE** tree to depend on size and quantity of trees ordered. The **FREE** Liberty Elm and Bronze Plaque will be presented in ERI's name as a gift to the municipality of your choice for planting on public property. For the **FREE** tree, you pay only loading and freight charges. Your gift will help ERI fulfill its mission to "Re-Elm" the streets of America. The framed print and poem will be sent to you in thanks for your support. For details visit [www.libertyelm.com](http://www.libertyelm.com).

### KEEP IOWA BEAUTIFUL

#### PAINT IOWA BEAUTIFUL GRANTS

Provides **FREE** paint for Iowa public or private non-profit organizations for beautification projects. Deadline February 28, 2008. For more information visit [www.KeepIowaBeautiful.com](http://www.KeepIowaBeautiful.com).

### NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION MANTIS AWARD

Awards 25 **FREE** Mantis tiller/cultivators (each complete with border edger attachment).

**Deadline March 1, 2008.** For details visit [www.kidsgardening.com/grants/mantis-criteria.asp](http://www.kidsgardening.com/grants/mantis-criteria.asp).

### CONSERVATION FUNDRAISING AT A CROSSROADS

#### Creating Healthy Fundraising Organizations

A practical, down-to-earth discussion of what's working, what isn't, and how conservation fundraising can improve. — Bob Smith

MARY HUMPHRIES  
TREC

Difficulties with fundraising? Does your organization find itself relying on one source of funding? Most organizational stresses that hinder fundraising efforts can be linked to five fundamental obstacles.

By understanding, acknowledging, and confronting these obstacles, groups will be well on their way to becoming healthy fundraising organizations. This **FREE** downloadable manual can assist in the continuation of successful fundraising for your group.

Download this manual at:

[www.grassrootsfundraising.org/howto/TREC\\_Conversation\\_Fund.pdf](http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/howto/TREC_Conversation_Fund.pdf)

### Organization need a tuneup?

This **FREE** downloadable manual focuses on strategies for building and strengthening internal dynamics, structures, and behaviors of conservation organizations. The manual also presents information about how conservation groups can "work smarter" and engage better with their communities.

Download this manual at

[www.trecnw.org/download/building-a-stronger-conservation-community\\_7-05.pdf](http://www.trecnw.org/download/building-a-stronger-conservation-community_7-05.pdf)

### BUILDING A STRONGER CONSERVATION COMMUNITY

Key Challenges and  
Effective Actions



TREC

Answer page 1 - All of these State Parks once served as camps to members of the Civilian Conservation Corps who served from 1933 - 1942. For more information about this exceptional group of men and their conservation deeds visit [www.iowadnr.com/parks/ccc/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/parks/ccc/index.html).

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT BY MERRY RANKIN



### lo-wha? Iowa!!!

I watched the movie Coach Carter recently. If you haven't seen it, I would definitely offer my recommendation. Story line goes (true story)...

inner city high school, Richmond - known only for its ability to survive on a day-to-day basis with no major shootings, etc. Academics, sports... yes, they are a part of the school, as best they can be. An alum of the school is contacted by his old (and the present) basketball coach to consider taking on this role after he retires.

And so the alum takes the job. And I'm sure you can fill in the rest of the pieces (and the ones you can't... well, I won't ruin the movie for you). Bottom line - Richmond went from a place that folks outside (and even some inside) the school district had never heard of to a place that the entire country spoke of around the dinner table.

The infamous chant of the team and fans... Rich-wha? Richmond!!!

In reflecting back over the movie, I thought of all the many places and things that have fallen into the "wha" category throughout history - only to become, as Richmond, the new buzz. I'm sure you can remember some of your own. Maybe it is your hometown that was the underdog at the state tournaments and blew away the competition. Maybe it is your bell bottoms or your holey work jeans that are suddenly all the rage.

Or maybe it is the state in which you live at this very moment (or at least most of you live). Yes, Iowa. I definitely think Iowa is getting some buzz these days. A few reasons come to mind that have attributed to the buzz... wineries, triathlons, hunting, fishing, ethanol, and of course the caucus.

But there is something even more basic that has the country buzzing... places of natural beauty, most notably, the opportunities to enjoy them. Things like trails being built to breathtaking overlooks, historic landmarks being restored, shelters and picnic areas being established to bring groups together, and educa-

tional programs about Iowa's wild places - have resulted in multiple visitors to our state bringing Iowa to their dinner table conversations.

Don't believe me? Well, just take a look at this newsletter. An international writer has written about the work of the Friends of Elk Rock State Park, the Friends of Pine Creek Grist Mill have received a national award, and countless efforts are taking place to provide more opportunities and more talk.

I ask each of you to look back over the projects your group undertook this past spring and summer, the events you completed, all the many details you attended to so that visitors to your park or place of natural beauty could come to know it as you do. Impressive, huh?

One of the ongoing lessons for Richmond High School was, "We succeed as a team, not as individuals." You all exemplify this - and in turn the buzz goes on.

**Congratulations, team!**

**lo-wha? Iowa!!!**

"To know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, that is to have success."

**-Ralph Waldo Emerson**

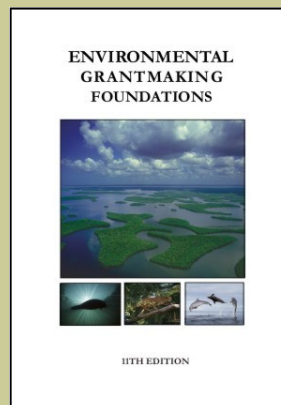
### FRIENDS NEWS BRIEFS

- The **Friends of Lake Manawa** are now online. Visit their new website at [www.friendsoflakemanawa.org](http://www.friendsoflakemanawa.org).
- The **Cedar Trails Partnership** is accepting grant proposals for expansion and improvement of the Cedar Valley trail system. Visit their website for details: [www.cedartrailspartnership.org](http://www.cedartrailspartnership.org).
- A multi-media virtual tour of the Mines of Spain Recreation Area presented by the **Friends of the Mines of Spain** is available on their website at: [www.minesofspain.org/addition.phtml](http://www.minesofspain.org/addition.phtml).
- The **Carter Lake Preservation Society** will be replanting their two rain gardens Spring of 2008. For an update on this project visit their website at [www.carterlakepreservation.org](http://www.carterlakepreservation.org).

For a complete listing of activities and events throughout the state visit:  
[www.iowadnr.com/parks/events\\_calendar/index.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/parks/events_calendar/index.html)

Visit the Keeper's of the Land online calendar at  
[www.keepersoftheland.org](http://www.keepersoftheland.org)

### NEED MONEY?



This publication is the best-selling guide to the most significant independent, community and company-sponsored foundations that fund environmental projects.

These foundations give over \$600 million for environmental purposes annually. Each profile gives you the data you need to target your most likely sources of support. Multiple indexes help you narrow your search to

the grant makers that fund your topics or your geographic focus.

Environmental Grant Making Foundations is available both new and used. Price varies from \$99.00 to \$125.00. For more information and available visit [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).